THOROUGH ORGANIZATION THE PRESENT NEED OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.*

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The old adage, "In union is strength," was never better exemplified than in the great industrial and commercial undertakings of the day. Organization and co-operation have become synonymous with progress and reform. They dominate every successful enterprise, and should be the head and front of all business relations—the essential factors in the ultimate issue of any great project—the means to a desired end. By them great armies are moved as a unit, and great victories won. By them the entire commerce of the nation is brought within the grasp of organized capital. By them industrial unions and combinations of labor have been formed, which will soon defy all the efforts of corporate power to disrupt. By them, the great religious denominations have become an immense power for good in the spread of the Gospel and teachings of Christianity throughout the entire uinverse.

For the medical profession, organization and co-operation are no less beneficial and imperative, but partly from modesty and partly from indifference, we have been tardy in taking advantage of these powerful forces, so quickly recognized and utilized by industrial and commercial bodies. That we are now awakening to the importance of organized medical activity, for professional advancement and public good, we have but to note what has been accomplished along these lines in years just past. For four years the growth of medical societies throughout the United States has been phenomenal; and there has been a personal interest manifested, which has never before been equalled in the history of the nation. It is estimated that the enrolled membership throughout the country now number not less than 45,000. The membership of the A. M. A. is something in excess of 20,000. It is only a few years since our own State Society numbered but a few scattering hundreds of indifferent inactive members, while now its enrollment approximates 1,800—a rapid increase in numbers, largely due to the personal efforts of a few organizers, very competent in forming county societies, making them the unit which carried with it membership in the State and A. M. A., the latter feature having done more to harmonize and interest the medical profession than all other influences combined.

Consider for a moment what this means! With an organization of nearly 50,000 of the best talent in the land banded together, what a tremendous influence for public good and professional advancement! This large gain in numbers, and the great good accomplished in the past, is only an earnest of what may be done in the future with united effort; but to this end every physician in the land must feel his individual responsibility and take an active part in this important constructive work. If we are to attain to that measure of success to which we are justly entitled, if we are to secure effective medical legislation, a just recognition of medical standards of the army and navy in the halls of Congress, if we are ever to have a medical officer in the cabinet and retain the confidence and good-will of the public, these will only come through organization, united effort and harmony in the medical profession.

Affiliation in the county society is of first importance. To further this end, every reputable physician in the land should have his name enrolled in the county society in which he lives, and not only be enrolled, but become an active working factor in the same. The time is near at hand, if not already in the present, when the physician will find it not only essential to his social position and material welfare, but a necessary requirement for his professional standing, that he be an honorable member of the medical societies to which his brother practitioners are entitled. Especially is this true of the young practitioner, who will need the sympathy, encouragement, council and good-will of those older and more experienced in the service. Nearly all insurance companies, corporations, and other large organizations of trust and profit, take note very quickly whether men seeking positions with them are or are not, members of those medical socities to which they should belong. It is a professional passport and a guarantee of our good standing with the medical profession, and if we have it not, there are grave and just suspicions of our unworthiness.

As you will note, I have made reservations as regards who may be entitled to membership in our medical societies. My own convictions are, and I do not hesitate to assert them, that the physician who is habitually unethical, inherently dishonest and dishonorable with his brother practitioner and fellow citizens, vulgar and ungentlemanly in his conduct, has no rightful claim to fellowship in any medical society. With these disqualifications, the medical society can do such a man little good, while it is more than probable that he would do it much harm. Membership in a medical society will not reform such men; their reformation should come first. He should be made to feel that it means something to be banded together in a profession whose sacred obligations are unsullied honor and the saving of human life; that it means something to have his name enrolled among the heroes and martyrs of medical science.

And as the county society is the portal through which all must pass, and as membership in these entitles him to affiliation in the State and American Medical Association, the highest and best in the land, it is here that the personnel and honor of the profession should be properly safeguarded.

I also note with much regret, the meager attendance and lack of interest in our district society meetings. Are we not losing some of our old time enthusiasm and real love for the practice of medicine? Are we forgetting there are other assets of far more value than dollars and cents, and making the money standard too largely the measure of professional success? We have in the valley nearly three hundred physicians in good standing who should rightfully belong to this society, enrolled as active members, yet there are not to exceed one

* President's address, San Joaquin Valley Med. Soc.

hundred. Instead of an attendance of thirty to fifty as at present, there should be from one hundred to one hundred and fifty at each meeting. Observation will teach you that it is frequently our busiest and most successful practitioners who are found in regular attendance at our medical societies and conventions. Experience has taught them how profitable it is to be there, for they get greater inspiration for their work, the mental horizon is broadened, the getting in touch with one another through this personal contact and exchange of ideas helps to do away with the petty jealousies, dissensions and bickerings which have been the curse of our profession in the past. They become not only better physicians for being there, but better men and better citizens.

No matter how remote, obscure or poor the physician may be, he cannot afford to stand aloof from his brother practitioners, and fail to attend these meetings. To do so, from the mistaken idea that he cannot afford the time required or expense incurred in attendance, is to impoverish himself a hundred fold. It is the everlasting grind and narrow routine of daily life that kills, and he who plods along from year to year, without change, rest and recreation, or strives to run the race alone, does by this very isolation tend to become narrow, warped and soured, disgusted with himself, his profession and the whole world.

Finally, if we come together to-day, with the purely selfish purpose of seeing, hearing and learning, without a thought of reciprocity in giving, building and constructing, we are failing in the highest of our obligations and opportunities. Let us begin the work before us with a broadminded tolerance for differences of opinion, in a spirit of charity, good fellowship and brotherly love, with only this end in view, the uplifting of humanity and the advancement of our profession.

PROPRIETARY MEDICINES.*

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Goethe once said that the most interesting book that could be written would be a treatise on human errors. In that book, large like a library, the history of quackery—well meant or deceitful—would fill a large place. The distrust of medicine and its powers is as old as the world, for not many ever knew or cared to appreciate what medical science or art is capable or not of accomplishing, or should be held responsible for. Besides, the more uncultured or uncontrolled the human intellect the greater is the predominance of mysticism. In Greece quackery was rife and Aristophanes made it the subject of ridicule. The elder Cato, who advised the use of cabbage against all sorts of disease and employed witchcraft and incantations for luxations, demanded the expulsion from Rome of the Greek physicians. The iatromechanics, who taught the direct interdependence of stars and man and prescribed pills compounded during the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus, and the mediaeval priests who cured with prayers and processions and auto da fes, must surely have met with failures and driven the sick somewhere else. Even the specialists among the saints, St. Anna the ophthalmologist, St. Judas the doctor for cough, St. Valentine for epilepsy, St. Rochus the veterinarian, may have made mistakes and proved incompetent.

Nor was the public always edified by the doctors in other resptcts. Hippocrates complains bitterly of the contests of doctors among each other. More than 2,000 years later Peter Frank thought and advised seriously that the only way to procure an orderly consultation was to call in the police. The maltreatment they were exposed to in the Middle Ages, the contempt in which wounds and ulcers were held, so that the medical faculty of Paris about 1300 commited their candidates by oath not to practice surgery; the barbarous methods of treatment by fire for the dangerous body fluids to which everything was attributed, and afterward the nauseating draughts with which the sick were punished until no better man than Hahnemann tried to redeem them—all that did not contribute to add to the dignity of the profession and to the confidence of the public. All that drove the masses into the arms of the sectarians and the quacks.

Then followed the era of scientific medicine, little more than half a century ago. It was built up on anatomy and physiology and was studied on biologic lines. We should have suspected that the darkness of quackery would disappear before the new light. On the contrary, it has grown in geometric proportions until the accumuled ignorance of quacks and fakers has become a power in every land. The Germans, who like to style themselves the nation of thinkers, have more quacks than any other people. Indeed, Saxony and Bavaria have one quack to two regular physicians; Berlin itself has two to nine. It is in Berlin that 29 per cent of the men among the quacks, including clergymen, workmen, stewards, bathhouse keepers, shepherds and university students —and 14.4 per cent of the women had, before embarking in the practice of doing the sick people, collided with the law courts on account of theft, forgery and sexual crime. It is Berlin that has a judge who, in discharging one of that ilk, said the man deserved the greatest confidence, for he was in possession of very good prescriptions obtained from the servant of a famous dermatologist.

Scientific medicine, as developed by the Vienna school more than fifty years ago, ended in nihilism. Patients, however, would not long be satisfied with being merely percussed and auscultated and autopsied. They had the pardonable wish to be healed and cured. But the only chance they were given was to serve as scientific material. With that they were not pleased and ran off to fill the offices and the coffers of the quacks. Then, after Skoda and Rokitansky, came Virchow, the great man of the century, the enemy of mysticism and obscurantism, the daily discoverer of new facts and new methods in pathologic anatomy, the founder of the cell theory, the great anthropologist and hygienist, the assiduous therapeutist of the individual man and of society,

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